

set stars into every vertebrae by 10pintsofsacrifice

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Summary:

Eleven notices that Mike is a bit oblivious about his feelings.

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Author's Note:

there's not rly any warnings tbh? there's mention of hand flapping as stimming tho!!
wrt the "disabled character" tag, eleven suffers from chronic joint pain as a result of spending a year in the upside down.
please tread carefully!!

Autumn seems to be a season of strange happenings that the citizens of Hawkins don't really have explanations for, and this fall doesn't seem to be any different.

You yourself are an anomaly in this sleepy little town. You with your close-shaved hair, with your bare feet and your bloody nose, you with the ability to lift a van into the air with the toss of your head. You don't fit in with the quiet and humble aesthetic of Hawkins but you're here anyway, with friends and a family that loves you. Though you and your friends are undoubtedly the weirdest people in this town, at least you're not the most dangerous.

The evening that you'd broken through a portal large enough for you to fit through - your previous attempts hadn't quite worked out, but this time you'd gotten it right - you'd collapsed in Castle Byers. Will's blankets were blessedly soft, a sensation you'd missed terribly while trapped in the strange in-between of worlds, and even though you were filthy and your clothes were tattered and torn, you'd felt safe enough to let yourself sleep.

When Will found you he just placed his hands on your upper arms and thanked you. You just smiled, and with shaking legs and linked arms he'd led you back through the thin woods to his house. Joyce took one look at you and pulled you into her arms, placing a kiss on your forehead as she whispered, "Welcome home." You don't think you've ever cried so hard in your life.

Seeing your friends again was like soothing a deep ache within you, something that only could've been eased by coming home, and you'd

felt something align in you when you'd melted into their arms (Mike had held you so tightly, barely leaving your side if at all, holding your hand, rubbing your back through nauseating headaches).

You settle into a space that was always open for you, almost like you'd never been anywhere else. You have your boys and you finally got to meet Will. You wouldn't have it any other way, and you're just relieved to be back.

So naturally things are weird.

Ever since you'd met him, Mike had given you confusing fluttery feelings that you weren't sure what to do with. A warmth humming beneath your skin that you'd never felt before.

That hadn't changed in the year you'd been gone. He is taller and all sharp angles with dark eyes and a crooked smile, finally beginning to grow into his gangly limbs, inky hair noticeably curlier like your own. To be honest, his beauty kind of hits you all at once.

Even Lucas and Dustin look older in a way that makes your heart ache. But they had never made you feel the way Mike does, with his rosy cheeks and shy gaze.

There's the gentle blushing looks you give each other. Then there's the way Mike looks at Will the same way.

It doesn't make you jealous like you thought it would. It confuses you, sure, but not in a bad way. It worries you that Mike won't talk about it, especially when his voice gets stuttery and cracks, or when his hands start shaking and his eyes go soft. And anyway, you don't blame him one bit.

Will is beautiful.

He might not make you feel the way Mike does but you can still admit that he's pretty. With his big brown eyes and his delicately defined features along with his gentle soft voice, you're not surprised.

It's been about a year since you've been back and you've begun calling yourself Mike's girlfriend, and for half of that time you've watched the two of them dance around each other obliviously. Dustin

wasn't kidding when he'd called Mike unmindful of his feelings.

You think about this while sitting on the couch in Mike's basement, a high-energy campaign progressing in the background. You look up as Will lets out a victorious whoop, Mike not visible except for his waving arms and Dustin and Lucas exchanging high-fives. You set your book down beside you, a slow smile spreading over your face as Will jumps up and down excitedly. He disappears from your line of sight for a moment before reappearing with a ruffled-looking beaming Mike, and you hide your grin behind your hand as Will throws his arms around Mike's neck and Mike's hands flutter around his waist.

They both pull away with flushed cheeks. Mike's freckles show darker through the rosiness, and he wears a dazed-looking smile. After a few more moments of enthusiastic celebration, Lucas and Dustin say their goodbyes and depart together for a sleepover.

As for you and Will, you're staying with Mike. You figure that maybe this could be your chance to talk to them, let them now you don't mind and you're just worried about them. You're nervous, though, that you're making false conclusions.

You don't even know what to say. You've never been good with words. You're...better, a lot better than you used to be but things still come out wrong and awkwardly phrased. It's a process and you're doing well, but you don't want to do this wrong. All it takes is for you to slip up once. Anxiety pricks your fingertips like little lightning bolts.

When Will goes upstairs to get changed you take your chance; you move to where Mike is still sat at the table and sit next to him, slowly interlacing his fingers with yours. He's so zoned out that he doesn't notice until you speak.

"Mike," you murmur, voice cautious and venturing. He startles a little but relaxes at the sight of you, meeting your gaze with a shy smile. His hand is clammy but you don't mind.

You brush some of his feathery bangs from his eyes and smile as he

leans forward to bump noses with you, eyes scrunched playfully. Your heart pangs fondly, stomach jolting pleasantly, and you stay there for a moment.

“I had a question,” you begin, ignoring the electric shock of anxiety racing up your spine. “You have this - a look, that you have when you look at me, but you also look at Will like that? Is something wrong?”

There. You said it.

Mike blinks and folds his lip between his teeth, beginning to bounce his leg as a blush lights his cheeks. You squeeze his hand reassuringly, rubbing across his knuckles with your thumb, hoping he can sense that you’re not upset. His eyes scan around the room for a moment, and then he sighs as he looks back to you.

“I was afraid you’d be angry. It’s weird that I like both of you, right? It’s one thing for me to like boys *and* girls, but this...”

You press a quick kiss to his lips. “There’s nothing wrong with how you feel, and I’m not mad. I know that I...I don’t completely understand these things, but if - if you like both of us, that’s okay with me.”

He lets out a sigh of relief. He leans forward and presses his face into your shoulder, body relaxing in increments as your words set in and after a moment you hear his muffled laughter, and he looks up with bright eyes and a wide grin, shaking his head as he mumbles, “God, you’re amazing, El Byers.”

“I know,” you say, winking. Mike snorts as he wipes the sleeve of his sweater over his eyes. You giggle and press a feather-light kiss to his forehead.

“At least I know my preference,” he muses, smirking. “Pretty brunettes with brown eyes and the kindest hearts. Oh, and the last name Byers.”

“Hush,” you snort. “You could - if you’re ready, you could tell Will? It’s okay if - if you can’t.”

Mike's eyes soften in a quiet type of consideration, drumming his fingers on his thigh. "I've wanted to for months. I - I could. I could - "

"Could what?" Comes Will's voice from the top of the stairs, followed by the soft click of the basement door. He's wearing his slightly too-big red long-sleeved pajamas, the fleece ones that match and sleeves that hang just over his hands. The words die in Mike's throat, cheeks heating for what has to be the third time in the span of thirty minutes. Mike stutters out a "nothing" and you roll your eyes, not unkindly. Will giggles despite the confused look on his face, bringing up his covered hands over his mouth.

Mike's cheeks only darken. He clears his throat and blinks rapidly, shaking his head quickly as if clearing his head, and he gives a goofy grin. Will shakes his head, padding across the basement to the two of you.

You squeeze Mike's hand one more time before letting go, giving him a hopefully reassuring smile. He nods as though steeling himself.

Will smiles but looks worried. When he meets your gaze you mouth "it's okay."

He seems to relax but there's the glint of confusion in his eyes when Mike pats the chair on his other side (Will's eyes go soft, folds his sleeves up to his wrists, cheeks tinged with pink), only increasing when he takes in Mike's nervous and jittery appearance.

You bring a hand up to play with the hair at the nape of Mike's neck.

He relaxes a bit and leans into your touch.

Will pulls out the chair next to the two of you to sit. Mike takes a deep breath and turns to Will while taking his hands into his on the table, and you clasp yours to rest them in your lap, not wanting to interfere.

"I, um, okay," Mike breathes. "I hope this doesn't sound weird or gross, but I - I like El but I, uh, I also like you. El is okay with that, but I don't want you to feel, y'know, jealous? Or pressured. If - you're okay, with this, and so is El,

then this could work, right?" Mike inhales, seemingly breathless. "That is, um, unless you don't want to - to do that."

Will doesn't say anything, but he does lace his fingers with Mike's and smiles. They share an honest look that feels...wrong, to see, like it's meant only for them and no one else. You bite your lip and Will turns to you with glossy eyes and a shy grin, opening and closing his mouth as if unsure what to say. When he turns back to Mike they lock eyes and its silent - until they both break out into laughter, cheeks glowing as Mike pulls Will into his arms and hugs him to his chest, tears of mirth in their eyes and on their cheeks - and you feel a sudden burst of affection so strong it nearly knocks you over.

You can't fight off this bubbly feeling of excitement that shudders in your chest as Mike places his hands on Will's cheeks and leans in. Mike leans down instead of tilting Will's chin up and the position looks uncomfortable, but when his eyes flutter closed and Will's hands come up to rest against his chest you know he doesn't mind. You hum and flap your hands enthusiastically at your sides.

When they part they're both breathing heavily and red-faced as if sunburnt. Mike leans over to you and presses a soft slow kiss to your lips as well.

Again your heart pangs with fondness for both boys, manifesting in short stuttery giggles and your flapping hands. You bounce on the balls of your feet when you pull away.

They both look at you with gentle eyes and languid smiles. You hum again as you take one of Will's and Mike's hands.

You pull them close. You swing an arm over their shoulders and beam. You murmur that you love them both, so much that it hurts sometimes.

"Love you too," they respond together. Your stomach tugs. You hug them close and tight once more before pulling back, saying that you're going to change too as you're the only one left in day clothes. You're able to close the bathroom door too, without a surge of fear from the pit of your stomach, and you take another few moments to flap your hands, watching yourself in the mirror, grinning. Once you

feel comfortable stopping you change into a pastel yellow sweater and black sweatpants. Both were given to you by Will upon your return.

You sigh contentedly as you set aside your knee and ankle braces for the night, rubbing the skin where they'd sat on your skin for the day.

Of course it doesn't hurt, but the pressure sometimes is sensorily displeasing: sometimes red marks are left behind which quickly disappear but are no less uncomfortable, and you try to rub the indents away because it comforts you in some strange way.

You pull your sleeves over your hands for a moment, pressing them to your face.

The sweater is soft with age, and its one of your favorite textures. It's usually one of the only textures you can stand during sensory overloads.

When you're satisfied, a warm feeling settles in your gut and you bundle up your clothes to leave on the counter.

When you step out your boys are out of sight, but you hear a soft conversation coming from the direction of The Fort.

You smile to yourself and quickly cross the room.

As expected, when you peer in you find Will and Mike entangled in blankets and each other. Mike shifts so you can settle against his other side. When you lay your head on his chest, you can see Will tucked against his shoulder comfortably. You reach out and poke his cheek while Mike takes one of your hands.

Will laughs, poking your nose with his free hand as Mike's holding the other. The three of you descend into tired giggles. You feel yourself fully relax, blankets pulled up under your arms. The weight and warmth is always good, and you're here with the two of them, here in your safe haven that's never been anything but soft and comforting.

When you lean up again you and Will nod to each other with mischievous smirks. Will scoots up a little to hide his face in the

space between Mike's jaw and his shoulder, while you touch a gentle hand to his cheek. He makes a sort of flustered but pleased noise of surprise; you smile when he feels both yours and Will's breath ghosting over his collarbone and shivers, letting go of your hands only to place one on the curve between your hip and ribcage and one on Will's.

Your eyes burn with sleepiness, so you press a soft kiss to Mike's jaw, then reach with minimal effort to ruffle Will's hair, smiling softly as an air of tranquility falls over the three of you, yawning as you press your face into Mike's neck, tangling your legs together and sighing as your eyes flutter closed.

(Neither you or Will have nightmares, for once.)